



LETTER SENT BY EMAIL ONLY

21 January 2025

FOI Ref 2024/25-093

Request

Your request for information dated 18 December 2024 is copied below.

Career Length

1. What is the average length of service for police officers retiring or resigning from your force in the past ten years? - Please list the years separately.
2. How many police officers have retired or resigned from the force each year over the past ten years?

Resignations and Retirements

3. How many police officers have left the force (not including retirements) within the first five years of service, broken down by year, over the past ten years?
4. What is the average length of service for officers who resign (as opposed to retire) from the force?

Reasons for Leaving

5. What reasons have been recorded for officers resigning from the force over the past ten years? (e.g., career change, stress, mental health, public abuse)
6. How many officers have specifically cited mental health, PTSD, or stress as reasons for leaving in exit interviews or other documentation over the past ten years?

Mental Health and Abuse

7. How many serving officers have taken sick leave citing stress, PTSD, or other mental health conditions, broken down by year, over the past ten years?
8. How many complaints or reports of public abuse (e.g., verbal, physical) against officers have been recorded in the past ten years?

Recruitment and Retention

10. What is the average length of service for new recruits joining the force in the past ten years?
11. How many new recruits left the force within their probationary period in each of the last ten years?

Optional Data Points

12. What initiatives or programs are in place to support officers' mental health and retention?
13. What is the force's current officer retention rate, and how has this changed over the past ten years?

Response

The Scottish Police Authority has considered your request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA).

Our response to each of your questions is provided below.

1. What is the average length of service for police officers retiring or resigning from your force in the past ten years? - Please list the years separately.

The Authority does not hold information on the average length of service of police officers retiring or resigning from Police Scotland.¹ Information may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

2. How many police officers have retired or resigned from the force each year over the past ten years?

The Authority holds some of the information requested. Information provided to the People Committee in May 2023 sets out the number of leavers (FTE) from 2016/17 to 2022/23, see Appendix B of the [Q4 and Year-end Workforce Report](#).

Table 3 is replicated below, see page 10:

Year ending 31 March	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Retirement on Pension	414.88	478.64	490.29	573.8	418.04	692.7	1006.25
Resignation	198.92	180.81	174.34	158.86	105.12	171.55	192.92
Transfer	27	28.84	28	40.7	16	20.75	23.83
Medical Retirement	101.84	75.32	101.98	66.87	39.99	32.33	64.49
Dismissal	6	6	3	2	2	3	7
Death	7	4	12	5	4	7	7

¹ This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

Information was also provided to the Resources Committee in June 2020. This shows the number of officers leaving Police Scotland from 2015/16 to 2019/20. This information is replicated below:

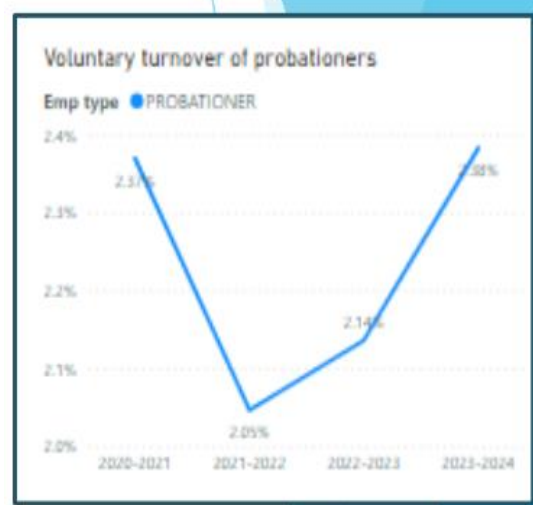
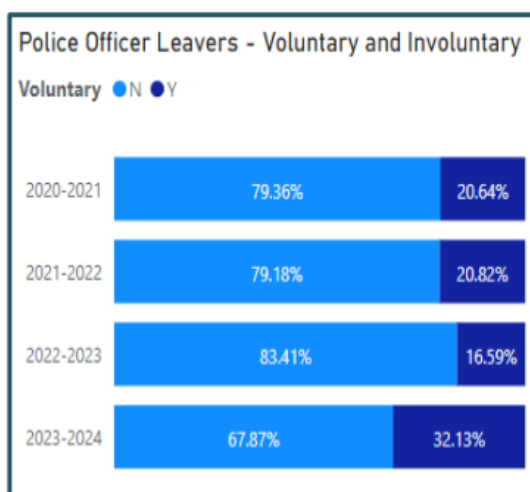
Police Officer Leaver Reason					
Leaver Reason	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Normal Retirement	504	418	481	494	576
Voluntary Resignation	296	211	190	181	164
Transfer to another Force	38	27	29	28	41
Medical Retirement	106	104	80	105	70
Dismissal	9	6	7	5	3
Death In Service	3	5	7	4	12
TOTAL	956	771	794	817	866

Information for previous years may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

- How many police officers have left the force (not including retirements) within the first five years of service, broken down by year, over the past ten years?

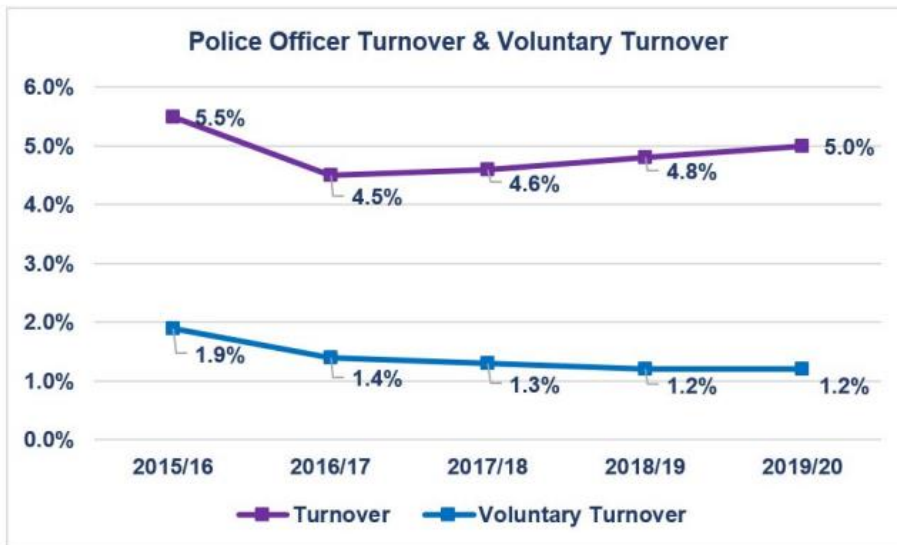
The Authority does not hold information on voluntary leavers within the first five years of service over the past ten years.²

To assist, information reported to the People Committee in May 2024 provides detail on the percentage of voluntary leavers from 2020/21 – 2023/24, and the voluntary turnover of probationers (i.e. those within 2 years of service). See page nine of the [Q4 and Year-end Workforce Report](#) - the relevant charts are replicated below:



² This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

Information was also provided to the Resources Committee in June 2020. This shows Police Officer Turnover & Voluntary Turnover from 2015/16 to 2019/20, see chart replicated below:



Information for previous years and within the first five years of service may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

4. What is the average length of service for officers who resign (as opposed to retire) from the force?

The Authority does not hold information on the average length of service of police officers resigning from Police Scotland.³ Information may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

5. What reasons have been recorded for officers resigning from the force over the past ten years? (e.g., career change, stress, mental health, public abuse).

The Authority holds some of the information requested. Information for financial year 2023/24 is provided below.

³ This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

Police Officers (01/04/23 – 31/03/24)	Total	% of Total leavers
Retirement - 25-30 years	349	41.0%
Retirement – pension	133	15.6%
Resignation – personal	128	15.0%
Resignation – other employment	118	13.8%
Retirement – medical	75	8.8%
Transfer to another force	22	2.6%
Dismissal – discipline	6	0.7%
Death in Service – natural causes (off duty)	5	0.6%
Resignation – education	5	0.6%
Death in service – suicide	3	0.4%
Regulation 9 – dismissal	2	0.2%
Regulation 9 – resignation	2	0.2%
Dismissal – attendance	1	0.1%
Dismissal – performance	1	0.1%
End of temporary contract	1	0.1%
Transfer – other	1	0.1%
	852	100%

Information was also provided to the People Committee in June 2022 outlining the main reasons for leaving by category covering the years 2019/20 - 2021/22. See pages 17-18 of the Q4 and Year-end Workforce Report – the relevant table is replicated below:

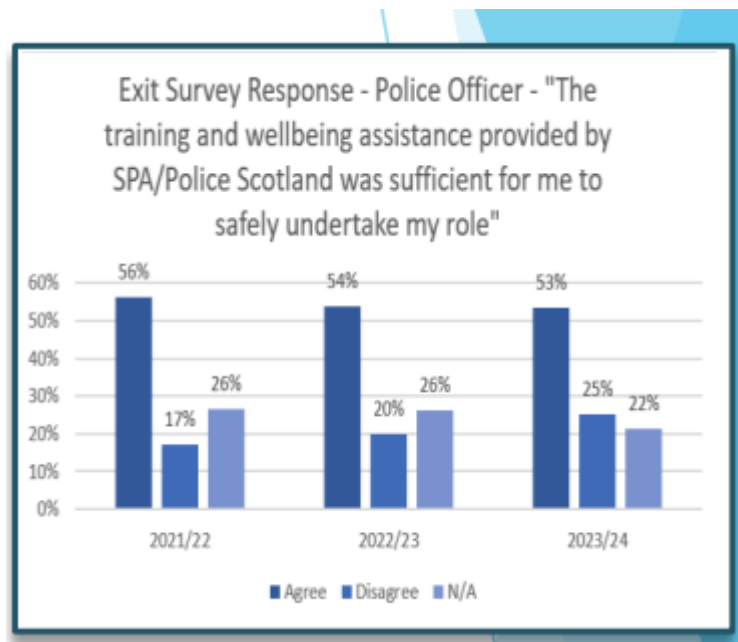
Reasons for Leaving by year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Death in Service	12	5	4
Resign	163	106	177
Retirement	576	421	689
Medical Retirement	70	42	33
Dismissal	<5	<5	<5
Transfer	41	16	21

Information for previous years may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

6. How many officers have specifically cited mental health, PTSD, or stress as reasons for leaving in exit interviews or other documentation over the past ten years?

The Authority does not hold the information requested.⁴ Information may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

To assist, information provided to the People Committee in May 2024 on exit survey responses related to wellbeing assistance is replicated below. See page three of Appendix A of the [Q4 and Year-end Workforce Report](#).



7. How many serving officers have taken sick leave citing stress, PTSD, or other mental health conditions, broken down by year, over the past ten years?

The Authority holds some of the information requested. Information on working days lost to stress and other stress from 2021/22-2023/24 was reported to the People Committee in May 2024. See page nine of the [Q4 and Year-end Workforce Report](#) – information summarised below:

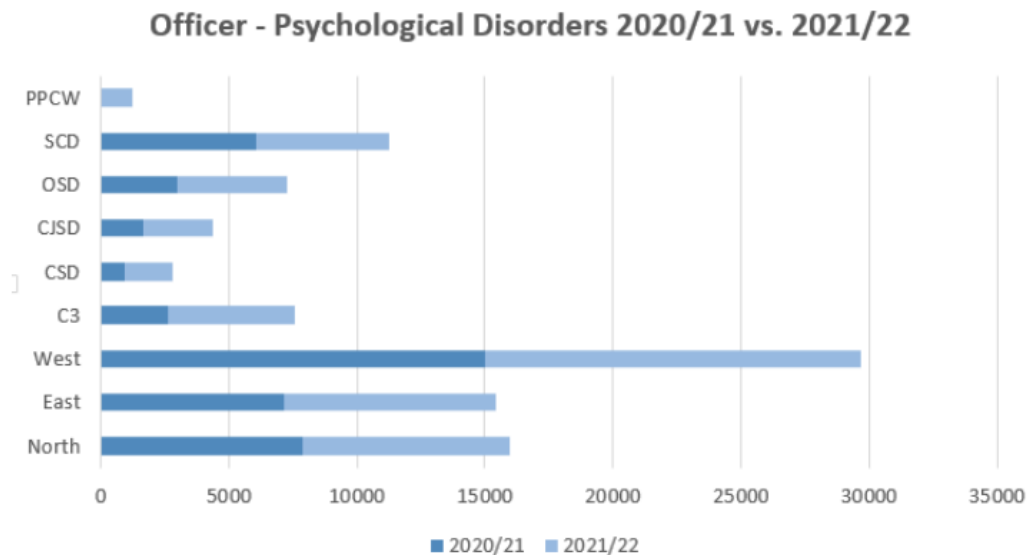
⁴ This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Working Days Lost to Stress and Other Stress (%)	0.91	1.16	1.23

Reporting to the People Committee in June 2022 outlines the percentage absences attributable to psychological disorders for 2020/21 and 2021/22. See page 28 of the [Q4 and Year-end Workforce Report](#) – this is set out below:

	2020/21	2021/22
Proportion of Working Days Lost to Psychological Disorders (%)	21	18

Page 30 of the same report shows a comparison of mental health illnesses from 2020/21 to 2021/22 in a graph. This is replicated below:



Information provided in a briefing note to members of the People Committee in May 2023 set out a continuing trend in working days lost due to psychological disorders for officers. This is replicated below:

Continued increasing trend in working days lost due to psychological disorders for officers (albeit decrease this year for staff):

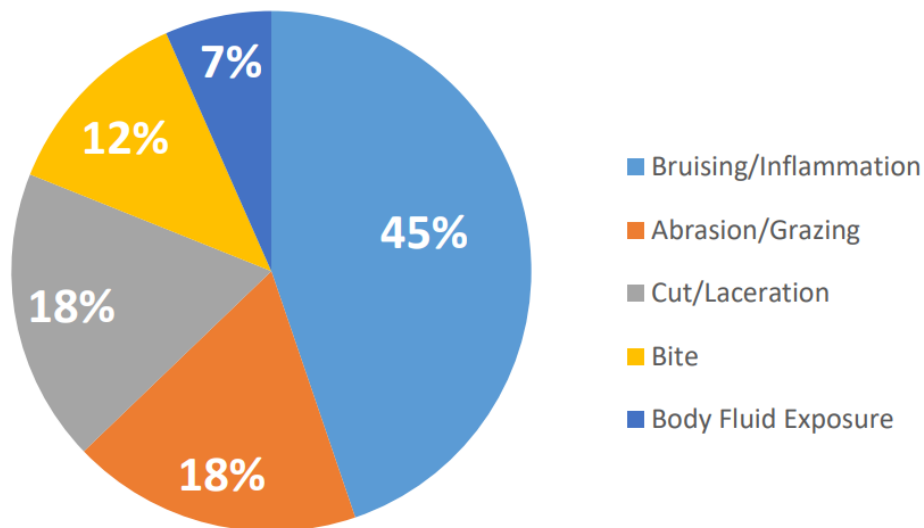
	19/20 (cf. 15/16)	20/21 (cf. prev yr)	21/22 (cf. prev yr)	22/23 (cf. prev yr)
Officers	+18.7%	+26.7%	+15.8%	+15.2%
Staff	+40.37%	+53.9%	+5.6%	-9.2%

Information for previous years may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

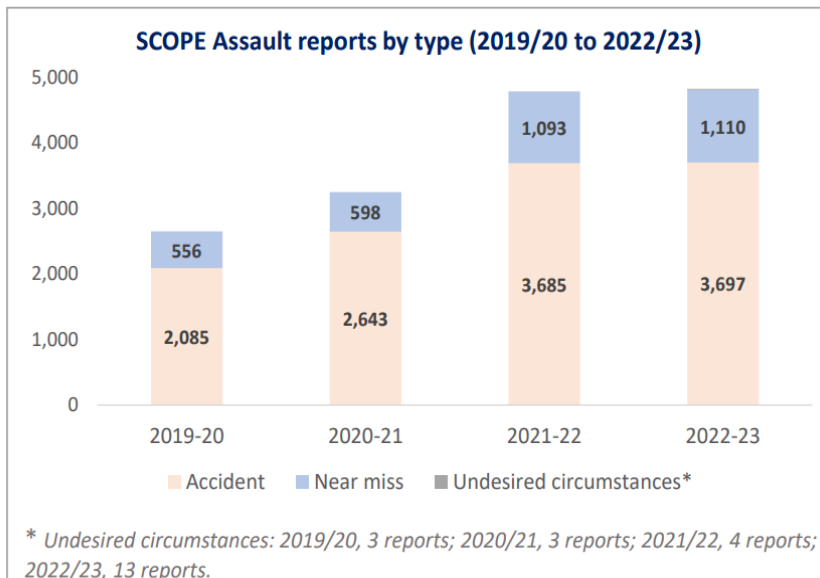
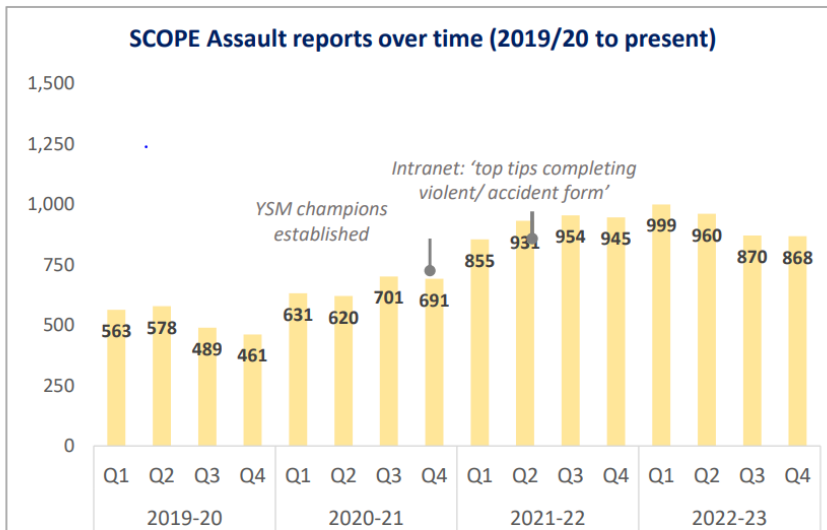
8. How many complaints or reports of public abuse (e.g., verbal, physical) against officers have been recorded in the past ten years?

The Authority holds some of the information requested. Reporting to the People Committee in May 2024 outlines that in 2023/24 there were 4469 assaults compared to 3697 in 2022/23, and provides further information in relation to the physical assault reasons. See page 6 of Appendix A of the [Health & Safety End of Year Report 2023/24](#) and replicated below:

Injury - Assault 2023/24



Reporting to the Authority's People Committee in May 2023 provided a breakdown of assaults by type and by quarter from 2019/20 to 2022/23. This is replicated below:



Information for previous years may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

10. What is the average length of service for new recruits joining the force in the past ten years?

The Authority does not hold information related to average length of service of police officers retiring or resigning from Police Scotland.⁵ Information may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

⁵ This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

11. How many new recruits left the force within their probationary period in each of the last ten years?

The Authority holds some of the information requested. Reporting to the People Committee in June 2020 detailed the number of police officers who leave with less than one years' service. The chart is replicated below:

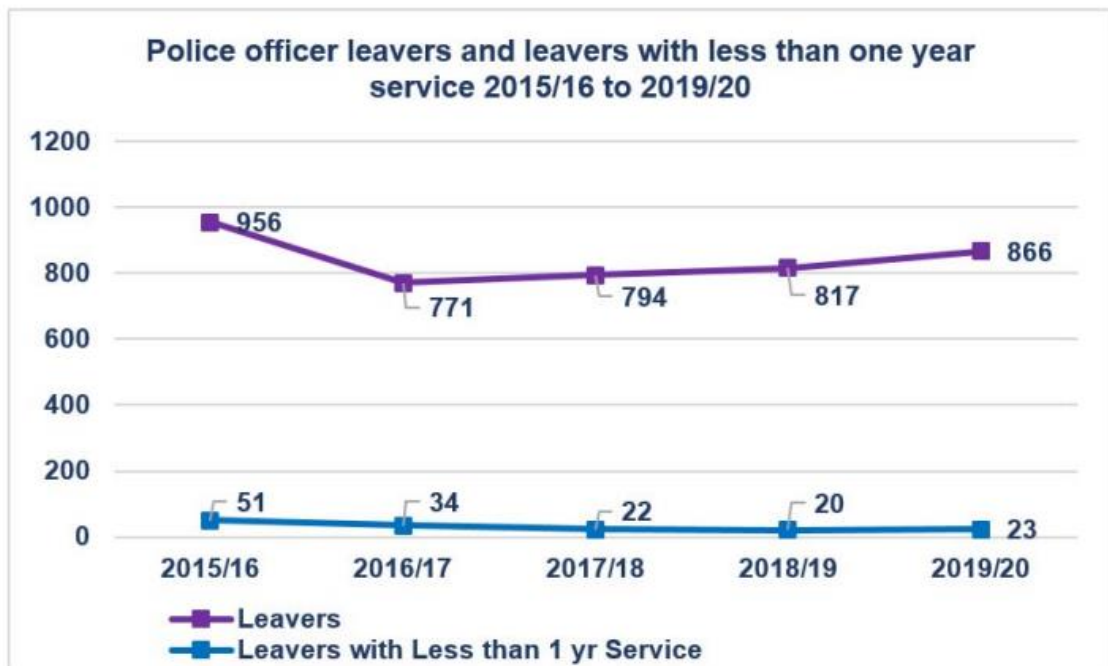


Chart 19

Information for other years may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

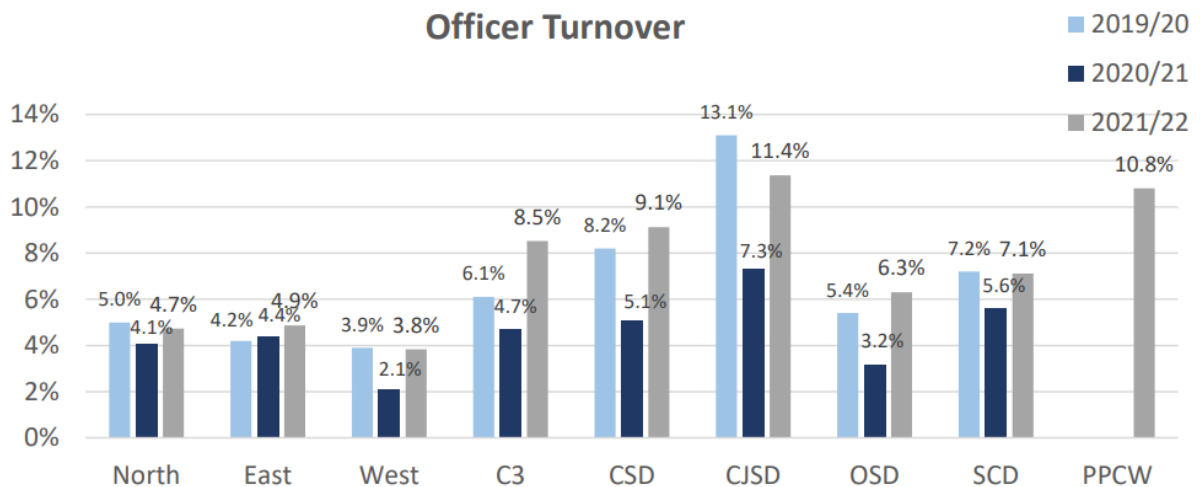
12. What initiatives or programs are in place to support officers' mental health and retention?

The Authority holds some of the information requested. Reporting to the People Committee in November 2024 provided an update on initiatives and programmes available to support officers - [Q2 Wellbeing Report & Action Plan update](#).

13. What is the force's current officer retention rate, and how has this changed over the past ten years?

The Authority holds some of the information requested. Police Scotland do not report on retention rate however they do provide information on turnover rates. Reporting to the People Committee in June 2022 provides officer turnover information by division / department for 2019/20 - 2021/22 (replicated below) and states that

the force wide officer turnover rate for 2021/22 was 5.38% which was an increase of 2.01% from 2020/21. See page 21-22 of the [Q4 and Year-end Workforce Report](#) and replicated below:



Information for other years may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

The primary data that informs the above-mentioned reporting is held by Police Scotland. Therefore, fuller information may be available by contacting Police Scotland at foi@scotland.police.uk

Right to Review

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your request you can ask for a review within 40 working days. You must specify the reason for your dissatisfaction and submit your request by email to foi@spa.police.uk or by letter to Scottish Police Authority, 1 Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1DZ.

If you remain dissatisfied after review, you can appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months. You can apply [online](#), by email to enquiries@foi.scot or by letter to Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Commissioner's decision, you can appeal to the Court of Session, only if you think the law has not been applied correctly.

This response will be posted to our [Disclosure Log](#) after seven days.

Yours faithfully

Scottish Police Authority